

Governor Taft Signs Mental Health Parity

On Friday, December 29, 2006 Governor Taft signed the Mental Health Parity Bill into law. Mental Health Parity (S.B. 116 and HB 180) provides for equality in health care coverage for some biologically based mental illnesses.

The bills, sponsored respectively by Senator Robert Spada and Representative Jon Peterson, will prohibit discrimination in group health care policies, contracts and agreements in the coverage provided for the diagnosis, care and treatment of biologically-based severe mental illnesses. Biologically-based severe mental illnesses include schizophrenia, schizoaffective disorder, major depressive disorder, bipolar disorder, paranoia and other psychotic disorders, obsessive-compulsive disorder and panic disorder.

One in five people is affected by mental illness. Mental health is essential to overall health. Each day, advancements in scientific research add to our vast body of knowledge about the biological basis of mental illnesses. The mental health of our citizens is reflected in the strength of our communities. Mental illnesses affect almost every American family. In Ohio, more than two million children, adolescents, and adults experience a mental disorder each year, and more than half a million of these are affected by serious and potentially disabling mental illnesses.

Mental disorders are as treatable today as are other chronic medical conditions, such as diabetes, heart disease and asthma. In some cases, treatment success and recovery rates are higher for mental illnesses than those of physical illnesses.

For more information, visit www.adamhfranklin.org or call 614-224-1057.

ADAMH is Franklin County's authority for planning, funding and evaluating mental health, alcohol and drug abuse prevention and treatment services. ADAMH-funded services are provided by a local network of more than 40 not-for-profit providers and offered on a sliding-fee scale, making them affordable for any county resident, regardless of income.
